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December 17, 2009

Ms. Barbara Lambis, Construction Grant Program Manager
National Institute of Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive, STOP 4701
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-4701

RE: UMaine 2009-NIST-ARRA, Construction Grant Proposal No. 9A00137
"Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory"

Dear Ms. Lambis:

I am writing to express my strong support for the University of Maine's proposal seeking NIST ARRA funding for the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory submitted under opportunity 2009-NIST-ARRA-CONSTRUCTION-01. The proposed $12.4 million grant, combined with a State MTAF $5 Million grant will help fund the construction of a leading laboratory in the development of advanced composites and offshore wind energy research.

In October of 2009, Department of Energy Secretary Chu announced an $8 Million award to the University of Maine to lead an offshore wind consortium called DeepCwind. The DeepCwind consortium includes over 35 private and public entities charged with leading the nation in development of floating deepwater offshore wind technologies. The proposed lab expansion is critical to achieving this goal. Once complete the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory will be a unique national facility with the capabilities to design, manufacture, and test advanced composites components for offshore wind facilities.

The Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory will increase personnel and diversify educational programs adding 145 faculty, staff and students.

The deepwater offshore wind program to be housed in the proposed NIST-AARA lab addition will be the key component for Maine's plan to deploy over 5 GW of offshore wind by 2030, an infrastructure that will attract $20 Billion into Maine and create up to 15,000 renewable energy jobs. This is the kind of project I envisioned when I voted for President Obama's stimulus package.

The UMaine Composites Center has continually delivered on innovations in alternative energy, military safety, transportation, shipping, which has earned it the top awards in composites materials in North America. Because of the University of Maine's Composites Center's excellence in research and development, and the project's vital role in securing our renewable energy needs, I strongly support their proposal for funding of the Advanced Nanocomposites in Renewable Energy Laboratory.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I may be of further assistance.

With best regards,

Mike

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress

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